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United for Quality Care

April 18, 2022
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Before the Appropriations Committee

***In Support of* HR 11 and SR 12: RESOLUTION PROPOSING APPROVAL OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT AND THE STATE EMPLOYEES BARGAINING AGENT COALITION (SEBAC)**

Good Morning Senator Kushner, Representative Porter and members of the Committee. My name is Darion Young. I have worked in state service for eight and a half years, and currently I work in Whiting as a Forensic Treatment Specialist. I'm here today to testify in support of House Resolution 11 and Senate Resolution 12.

Before the pandemic, DMHAS had plenty of time to get organized and figure out exactly what they needed to do. But when the pandemic hit, they were winging it. They had employees coming to work who were wearing masks on their own & Directors of Nurses telling people they were not allowed to wear masks. At some point the administration started allowing people to wear masks but we had to sign a waiver to wear one. A few days later, everyone had to wear a mask. The rules changed so many times I can't even count. And I still showed up to work no matter the circumstances.

I got covid and it almost killed me. And even though I still have lingering effects, I still have to come into work, and we're still short staffed so each day I go into work I get mandated and work 16 hours straight every day. The amount of stress is incredible, but state workers like me have to continuously keep working, continuously keep suiting up and going into this fire every day. There's signs in people's yards that we're heroes, they say it in commercials and on tv and yet no one wants to compensate us for these risks. This contract does that. It is fair. It is honorable and it appreciates workers like me - who put our lives at risk taking care of our patients day in and day out.

The Yankee Institute would like you to think I am a tick sucking the blood out of the state when I am really part of the lifeblood of the state safety net. State workers like me are the ones who show up day in and day out to make sure that the services our patients and clients need and depend on continue to run even when the rest of the state isn't.

Thank you for your time.

